



State of Wisconsin
Jim Doyle, Governor

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New Initiatives Help Grow Wisconsin

Biomass, land use initiatives position Wisconsin for tomorrow's economy

By Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

MADISON – To prepare for the economy of the future, the state has launched a pair of initiatives bringing state business and government leaders together to coordinate efforts and identify opportunities that will help Wisconsin achieve its full economic potential. The Governor's Consortium on BioBased Industry and the Working Lands Initiative will be crafting a roadmap for growing Wisconsin's new rural economy.

Governor Doyle has committed his administration to promoting sustainable economic growth for Wisconsin's future. A growing bioeconomy will help rural communities and local farmers secure a place in Wisconsin's economic future by creating new markets for their products. And, developing our state bio-industries is not only good for our economy -- it is good for the environment, and helps reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

That's why the Governor's Consortium on Biobased Industry is partnering with our Working Lands Initiative to develop strategies that will guide state leaders as they create policies and programs that let Wisconsin businesses, educational institutions and its skilled labor force seize the opportunities of the future.

Virtually everything that can be made from petrochemicals can be made from plants. The 'bio-revolution' could be as momentous as the industrial revolution. And Wisconsin, with our abundant agriculture and forestry biomass resources, is uniquely positioned to be a leader.

Consortium on Biobased Industry

To capitalize on our natural resource and land base, Governor Doyle has appointed the Consortium on Biobased Industry. Its task is to prepare a roadmap and recommendations on how

best to support the development of renewable fuels and energy and bio-based products in Wisconsin. The consortium brings together farmers and foresters, ethanol manufacturers, energy experts, researchers and entrepreneurs to position Wisconsin to be a leader in the emerging bio-economy.

Bio fuels and related bio-based products offer tremendous opportunities to meet the state's growing energy needs, strengthen the state's economy, and improve the environment. Biological materials are already being used in place of oil, coal and natural gas in a variety of industries including electricity generation, transportation and manufacturing. And, developing more beneficial uses for farm wastes will reduce environmental compliance costs for producers while at the same time protecting our land, air, and water.

(MORE)

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Wisconsin is not alone in recognizing the tremendous potential for bio-based products. Throughout the Midwest, governors, state agencies, and universities are working to develop biomass industries. They are investing in research and new technologies that convert agriculture and forest products into sources of energy and/or substitutes for petrol-chemicals in manufactured products.

In Wisconsin, we may not have oil fields, but biomass is a source of renewable energy for which Wisconsin is a natural leader. We have abundant biomass resources, including crops and waste from paper mills, cheese plants and livestock facilities.

Working Lands Initiative

Realizing that future of Wisconsin means we must preserve the land base upon which those natural resources depend. The Working Lands Initiative is about boosting Wisconsin's economic development, especially in rural communities, in order to strategically protect the land for the economy and protect all our natural resources for future generations.

For these reasons, I appointed a 28-member steering committee to develop a vision on managing and preserving Wisconsin's valuable land assets. This diverse group of citizens, including developers, farmers, conservationists, and local government officials, are taking a comprehensive look at ways to preserve that critical mass of land necessary to keep our economy growing and vibrant.

The Working Lands Initiative goals include creating a policy tool kit for state and local government to protect these critical lands. These policy tools will include a natural resource portfolio that recognizes the "other" values of working lands such as water recharge areas, critical habitat for wildlife, and carbon sequestration.

The Working Lands Initiative will also seek innovative partnerships between public and private entities to maximize efforts in preserving our natural resources through Community Collaboration Networks and a shared vision.

The timing is critical, because even though we have many diverse and rapidly urbanizing areas of Wisconsin, we still have much to preserve and sustain in Wisconsin's working lands.

In many ways, Wisconsin has always had a bio-based economy, centered on agriculture, tourism and forestry. But everyday we see more fragmentation of farm and forest land, resulting in significant loss to the economy, the environment and - potentially - our future quality of life.

Clearly, Wisconsin stands at a crossroads today, and we must plan for our future. The Biobased Industry Consortium and Working Lands Initiative will help continue our momentum generated by Governor Doyle's *Grow Wisconsin* initiative. The goal is to get the state off to a head start on the next generation economy and maintain Wisconsin's traditional position as a national leader.

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Sidebar

The Working Lands Initiative Steering Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month at the DATCP Board Boom. Future meetings are:

- Wednesday, November 2nd, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 7th, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Governor's BioConsortium future meetings are October 17th and December 12th.